



# Onamatai

fantasy turtle conman

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## Chapter 1 by TraderVic12

It was larger than anything in the world.

Vikram saw the turtle three days ago, and could not believe it at first, and then felt more disturbed every day as they got closer. From a distance he could see the city on the turtle's shell, but today morning they were close enough to lose sight of whatever was up there. And then they got in the beast's shadow and Vikram's heart started pumping like never in his life. It was real. Onamatai was real.

He met Chakran seven years ago and the minute they shook hands they knew they will work along just fine. It was a chain of perfect con jobs since, and they gathered enough money to retire. Chakran's greed got the worst of him though, and he agreed to do one job to many. Stealing from a palace of a city, that most thought of as legend and myth is not a job Vikram would agree to. Chakran did not listen, and before anyone knew, he and Jumi, a girl he apperenticed once, went on searching for Onamatai.

'Remember' Jumi said 'speak no words. It's their custom to only speak with female merchants.'

'I know,' Vikram nodded. She told him endless times how their nobility and army is mostly well trained women, and that under

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'He is still considered a southern noble,' Vikram said. 'He can be held, and not killed. If his cover is blown, he is a dead man,' she con

Vikram looked at her face. She was focused, and a little worried.

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'Aren't you even a bit overwhelmed by this?' Vikram waved his hand at the gigantic turtle that slowly moved one of its legs, covering the sky and the sun.

She looked up, as if noticing it for the first time and then met Vikram's eyes.

'I am,' she said, and she got back to fiddling with some piece of paper.

Vikram looked at the turtle again. There were now other wagons loaded with goods on the road, moving slowly. Under the turtle's belly there was another contruction. One of the traders, a Karesian woman named Maia, did a lot of business with Onamatians and said, it's called the Underside. There are thousands of people living there, slumped together in houses that hang from the turtle's undershell. From these houses ladders and ropes extend that allow people living on the ground to go up and send their goods. Onamatians pay well in pure turtleshell and turtlemeat, and are fond of taking other foods, cloth and gold as payment.

'Are you sure you want to do this?' Virkam asked Jumi again.

She looked up with annoyance on her face at first, but then looked Vikram in the eyes.

'I love him,' she said. 'Do you?'

## Chapter 2 by TraderVic12



Chakram's chains jingled as he walked past the guard.

It wasn't customary to the Onamataians to kill off noblemen, so he had to uphold his cover no matter the price. That meant staying in cells with other noblemen, whiny bastards who took everything for granted before they got prosecuted and sentenced by the Onamataians.

'You done yet?' the guard raised his hand and looked at the turtleshell flask in Chakram's hand. Chakram took a last long swig, and gave it back.

Without words the guard gave the flask to another prisoner and nodded pointedly at the cell doors. With a tired sigh Chakram moved his chained legs. No captain Freya today, he thought, lest wait for tomorrow.

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